

# SafetyGram

August 2005



## Driving Safety Tips

Here's a culmination of various driving safety tips, both on motorcycles and in POV's. No particular order. Some address stick shift only.

1. Learn the gear pattern without ever having to look down at the shifter. This applies to both manual and automatic trannies.
2. Uphill starts for a stick shift (practice on a driveway ramp, if possible. That way, you can't roll back too far): 1) Set the e-brake, ensuring no roll. 2) Put in gear. Let clutch out until you can feel/hear engine "work". 3) Give a little more gas - just enough to keep engine from stalling. 4) Let off e-brake. 5) More gas, less clutch.
3. Don't keep clutch pedal in if not necessary (put in neutral at stop lights).
4. Don't "coast" to a stop. Downshift when engine compression no longer helps slow you down. You should always be in gear when moving.
5. Don't bog the motor. There's no "rule" here. If you can feel the engine labor, downshift.
6. Do not tailgate. Ever. But... following a car too far back will only encourage people to cut in front of you. There's a fine balance between following at a safe distance, and too far.
7. Watch for "the other guy" by looking at their head and steering wheel to see what their intentions are. Look at their tires to see if they are moving and in what direction.
8. Observe where the dents are on the "other guy's" car, and stay clear of that area of the car. That's his blind spot (along with the traditional 4-5 O'clock blind spot).
9. Adjust your outside mirrors so that the rear corners of you vehicle are just missing from the inside of the mirrors (perimeter positioning). Get the biggest "round" mirrors (3" is good) for each outside mirror to lessen your blind spots.  
[http://www.nasoceana.navy.mil/Safety/Home Page/SideMirrorAdjustment.htm](http://www.nasoceana.navy.mil/Safety/Home%20Page/SideMirrorAdjustment.htm)
10. If the sun is directly behind you, oncoming traffic may not see you. Be careful of oncoming left-turners in this situation.

11. If an accident happens in front of you - SLOW DOWN QUICKLY AND IMMEDIATELY. Do not get caught up in the thrill of the moment or you will be part of it.

## ARE YOU AN AGGRESSIVE DRIVER?

Aggressive driving has become a serious problem on our Nation's roadway's. What is aggressive driving? Most of us know it when we see it, but the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), defines aggressive driving as occurring when "an individual commits a combination of moving traffic offenses so as to endanger other persons or property".

### Characteristics of Aggressive Drivers

- They are high-risk drivers, more likely to drive impaired, to speed, and/or to drive unbuckled.
- They are drivers who see their vehicles as providing a cover of anonymity and therefore tend to be less inhibited or more likely to engage in aggressive behavior.
- They are frequently "Type A" personalities characterized by high levels of competitiveness, time urgency, irritation and hostility.
- They run stop signs, disobey red light, speed, tailgate, weave in and out of traffic, pass on the right, make unsafe lane changes. Flash their lights, blow their horns, or make threatening hand and facial gestures.

According to the New Jersey State Police, 63 percent of fatal crashes were the result of violations attributed to aggressive drivers.. For more information on Aggressive Driving and a look at one product which addresses this issue, the **National Aggressive Driving Action Guide**, you can visit NHTSA website at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov).

## Safe Passage

When you think of CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY, you probably think about infant and booster seats. But there's another, hidden child-passenger safety issue that's especially important during the months of summer: **hot cars**.

When it's sunny - even on relatively mild days - cars can act like ovens, with temperatures inside increasing quickly and dramatically. On hot days, the effects can be deadly. According to a study conducted by Dr. Oded Bar-Or, a pediatrician and director of the Children's Exercise and Nutrition Centre at Canada's McMaster University, within 20 minutes the air temperature inside a previously air-conditioned small car exposed to the sun on a 95°F day exceeded 122°F. Within 40 minutes the temperature soared to 150°F.

Also according to Bar-Or's study, extreme heat affects infants and small children more quickly and dramatically than it affects adults. A child's core temperature can increase three to five times faster than that of an adult. Heatstroke, or hyperthermia, occurs when the body's core temperature reaches 105°F. In a car's

confined space, the temperature can climb so quickly that it over-whelms a child's ability to regulate his or her internal temperature. Children's bodies can go into shock quickly, and circulation to vital organs can fail.

The bottom line: **Never** leave a child alone in a vehicle. Even for a few minutes.

### **Protect Your Eyes From Harmful UV Rays**

Most people are aware of the potential damage ultraviolet (UV) rays can do to the skin, but are less aware that anyone who spends time in the sun runs the risk of developing eye damage caused by exposure to these same rays. Read more at [www.preventblindness.org/news/releases/uv0502.htm](http://www.preventblindness.org/news/releases/uv0502.htm).

Source: *Prevent Blindness America Website*

### **Even Common Chemicals May Require Special Gloves**

Just because a chemical isn't considered industrial-strength doesn't mean it can't hurt you. Seemingly ordinary chemicals are often overlooked when it comes to hand safety. Although these products typically include an appropriate set of warnings and use instructions, users often neglect to read the fine print, leading to the possible mishandling of a hazardous substance.

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